

Eisenhower's Charm Tops Military Skill, Briton Says

LONDON, Feb. 16 (AP).—Britain's top strategist of World War II says Dwight D. Eisenhower's strong point as a commander was his charm rather than military ability.

Field Marshal Viscount Alanbrooke, wartime chief of the imperial general staff (1941-46), made his observation in a war diary forming the basis of a new book released tomorrow, "The Turn of The Tide."

Before being elevated to the peerage, the general was known as Sir Alan Francis Brooke.

Lord Alanbrooke did not have a very high opinion of most United States military leaders as strategists, including Gen. George C. Marshall, chief of staff. But he praised Gen. Douglas MacArthur as "the greatest general of the last war" and spoke well of Gen. Walter Bedell Smith.

Sir Arthur Bryant, noted British historian, who wrote the book credits Alanbrooke with being the mastermind of the grand strategy that brought the allies victory.

"He Learned a Lot"

Lord Alanbrooke, in a footnote to his diary referring to Gen. Eisenhower, said:

"He learned a lot during the war, but tactics, strategy and command were never his strong points.

"... Where he shone was his ability to handle Allied forces, to treat them all with strict impartiality, and to get the very best out of an interallied force.

"In all the early times he was uncommonly well served by his chief of staff, Bedell Smith, who had far more flair for military matters than his master."

Lord Alanbrooke, who had hoped to lead the allied invasion forces into France—an assignment that went to Gen. Eisenhower—went on to comment:

"... Ike was blest with a wonderful charm that carried him far; perhaps his great asset was

a greater share of luck than most of us receive in life.

"However, if Ike had rather more than his share of luck we, as allies, were certainly extremely fortunate to have such an exceptionally charming individual. As Supreme Commander what he may have lacked in military ability he greatly made up for by the charm of his personality."

Rows With Churchill

Lord Alanbrooke, an impetuous Irishman, devotes most of his diaries to details of rows with Winston Churchill, though he pays tribute to the wartime prime minister as the man who "saved the world from Nazi domination."

Sir Winston was depicted as a ruthless boss always ready to denounce as "defeatist" anyone who thought of anything but attacking even in the darkest days of the war.

Once when his chief of staff tried to dissuade Sir Winston from a spur of the moment idea calling for a fantastic attack, the Prime Minister retorted angrily: "I do not want any of your long-term projects, they cripple initiative."

Lord Alanbrooke went to all the major wartime conferences with Sir Winston after the United States entry into the war.

At Odds With Marshall

The British Field Marshal was repeatedly at odds with Gen. Marshall. He said though his American counterpart was a great organizer "it is quite im-



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possible to argue with him as he does not begin to understand a strategic problem."

In a postwar postscript, Lord Alanbrooke wrote:

"I have often wondered since the war how different matters might have been if I had had MacArthur instead of Marshall to deal with."

Britain's main headaches, he said, were to stop the Americans from launching a cross-channel invasion of France before the time was ripe and emphasizing the importance of crushing Germany before Japan.

Clashed With King

Lord Alanbrooke said Gen. Marshall once pressed for a cross-channel strike as early as 1942. Alanbrooke said this would have led to disaster.

The British chief of staff told, too, of repeated clashes with the late Admiral Ernest King, whom he accused of looking only to the Pacific.

Lord Alanbrooke often protested against the way Washington and London "bowed and scraped" to the Russians, especially when the Soviets were clamoring for a second front.

Lord Alanbrooke was impressed with Stalin, however, and wrote in his diary after first meeting the Soviet dictator "... I was much impressed by his astuteness and his crafty cleverness. He is a realist, and with little flattery about him, and not looking for much flattery either."